

**Primary Initial Teacher Training
Partnership based on**

Newman College of Higher Education

**Genners Lane
Bartley Green
Birmingham
B32 3NT**

**A short inspection report
2005/06**

**Managing Inspector:
Juliet Ward HMI**

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Introduction

Newman College of Higher Education works in partnership with 220 schools to provide primary initial teacher training (ITT) courses. It offers three and four year undergraduate primary and early year's courses and one year postgraduate primary and early year's courses for primary trainees. At the time of the inspection there were 650 trainees.

Context

The inspection was carried out by a team of inspectors in accordance with the *Ofsted Handbook for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Training (2005-2011)*.

This report draws on evidence from a short inspection of the provision and an inspection of the management and quality assurance arrangements.

Grades are awarded in accordance with the following scale

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Main inspection judgements

Management and quality assurance Grade 2

The overall quality of training is at least good.
The provider will receive a short inspection in three years.

Key strengths

- the strenuous efforts made to attract and recruit trainees from under-represented groups
- the highly focused support and guidance to meet the individual needs of trainees throughout their course
- the very effective auditing of subject knowledge and the highly appropriate support provided to remedy weaknesses
- the strong links between the various course modules and with school-based experiences
- the strong sense of partnership and excellent communication between all partners
- the carefully-considered school placements which ensure that trainees have a well balanced experience across their 'preferred' key stages.

Points for consideration

- ensuring subject action plans have well defined success criteria which are focused on outcomes for trainees
- identifying the contribution of assignments towards meeting the Standards
- ensuring lesson observations provide sharply focused subject-specific feedback.

The quality of training

1. The different elements of the courses combine well to ensure that trainees make good progress towards meeting the Standards. The content of the various courses is tailored very well to ensure that all trainees are prepared to teach across two consecutive key stages. There is especially good coverage of the national strategies, the National Curriculum and the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage Curriculum. Tasks and assignments are relevant, successfully link college and school-based experiences and provide ample opportunities for trainees to demonstrate progress towards the Standards. Action has been taken to ensure that all trainees have the opportunity to consider strategies to promote social and educational inclusion and the teaching of pupils who have English as an additional language. Courses are coherent and there are strong links, for example, between the professional studies modules and those for the core subjects. For the undergraduate programmes there is a very useful overview identifying the relationship between the various modules and the school placement tasks. Careful account is taken of the feedback from trainees and school and college-based tutors in designing courses. Planning teams have benefited from the input of school-based personnel.
2. Sessions are well planned. Tutors model good primary practice and draw upon a suitable mix of theoretical and practical activity. Trainees are very positive about the quality of school and college-based training.
3. Highly focused attention is given to meeting the individual needs of trainees, from the selection interviewing stage through to the completion of the Career Entry and Development Profile. Support is especially effective for those trainees with disabilities. The arrangements to monitor trainees' progress during the course are organised well and clear targets for improvement are set. At the completion of school-based experiences, tutors and trainees collaborate to formulate targets for action that takes account of prior experience and which are matched closely to individual needs.
4. There are very effective systems to assess, track and develop subject knowledge. At interview, applicants' knowledge of English and mathematics is carefully screened and trainees who have particular needs are given additional work which is checked by tutors at the start of the course. All trainees audit their subject knowledge in English, mathematics and science and this helps them to focus their study on their areas of weakness. Those trainees with weak subject knowledge are supported well through self-study tasks and additional taught sessions to bring their knowledge up to the required standards.
5. Overall, the quality of written feedback on assignments is appropriate. However, comments do not always sufficiently inform trainees of which Standards have been met.

6. During school experiences trainees receive regular feedback on the quality of their teaching, but the helpfulness of this is variable. However, it does not always provide incisive information about subject specific pedagogy. Feedback from lesson observations is not always sufficiently cross-referenced to the Standards, although a new reporting form has been designed to remedy this.

7. The systems for monitoring trainees' progress during the course are well organised. Partnership tutors are required to work closely with school-based tutors to monitor trainees' progress and to set targets for improvement. Trainees are responsible for providing illustrative evidence to show that they have met the Standards. Most perform this task well, although there are some notable variations in the quality, especially in respect to the evidence used to demonstrate that Standards have been met.

Management and quality assurance

8. The criteria for selecting trainees are rigorous and very well designed to ensure that there is transparency and fairness for all applicants. There are very good procedures to ensure there is equity of experience for the candidates, including annual training sessions for all interviewing staff and comprehensive interviewers' packs. All necessary checks are carried out. The selection process recruits well qualified candidates and withdrawal rates are very low.

9. The course prospectus and the informative web site provide very detailed information for applicants. The Training and Development Agency (TDA) target for the recruitment of trainees from minority ethnic and under-represented groups has been exceeded, and the number of applications from potential trainees with a declared disability has risen significantly. Open days and open evenings are well attended and received positively.

10. The programmes are managed well and there is a strong sense of teamwork between the university and partnership schools. There is a good balance between school-based and centre-based training. School-based staff contribute to the development, planning and delivery of training. Together with their pupils school staff have led innovative sessions for trainees and trainers; for example school pupil council members have contributed to sessions about citizenship from their own perspective and that of their peers. College tutors work alongside trainees and pupils on a number of projects; for example, developing art and history.

11. The partnership agreement meets the Requirements fully. The partnership co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the expertise in partnership schools. The excellent relationships between the college and schools are evident in the way clusters of schools are organised to co-ordinate training provision for the PGCE trainees.

12. The roles and responsibilities of all trainers are set out clearly in the partnership handbook. Partnership tutors make joint lesson observations with school-based mentors, and provide helpful training for new mentors. Partnership school staff carry out their roles and responsibilities carry them out with a high degree of commitment and enthusiasm. Tutors are well qualified and experienced practitioners. They offer good models of primary practice, and several are currently involved in research activities. Most school-based staff take full advantage of the excellent range of training opportunities. Full account is taken of their levels of expertise. There are sensible reciprocal arrangements for the training of mentors with another provider.

13. Communication is excellent. The staff in the partnership office are efficient. The trainees and schools know whom to contact for information. Systems and procedures for allocating school placements are well established and ensure that this complex task is handled smoothly.

14. There is a comprehensive range of well organised resources to support the trainees' research and planning for assignments. The resources for information and communication technology resources are especially extensive.

15. There are effective procedures for monitoring the application of policies on equality of opportunity and for the promotion of good race relations. A good range of training sessions help to increase the awareness of all college and school-based staff.

16. Arrangements for monitoring developments in the training programme are effective. For example, headteachers visit other schools to moderate trainees' standards and evaluate the quality of support from school-based tutors. The support and guidance provided by partnership tutors is mostly good.

17. There are well established procedures for the internal moderation of trainees' written work and practical teaching. Regular core and programme meetings and joint lesson observations are strong features of internal moderation. The quality of the external examiners' reports has improved since the last inspection and the provider's guidance to examiners is comprehensive.

18. The provider has extensive procedures to evaluate the quality of provision. A wealth of data is generated from trainees', tutors' and school-staff evaluations of the quality of training. Where there is evidence that quality has not been maintained, prompt and decisive action is taken.

19. Self-evaluation is well organised, detailed and informative. Appropriate targets are set for future action. Further work is being undertaken to plan for future provision in light of the developments in education, for example, the 'Every Child Matters' agenda. The quality of the improvement planning provides a secure basis for ongoing development. Actions within individual subject plans are appropriate but success criteria are insufficiently measurable and focused upon outcomes for trainees.

20. The provider has made a good start in benchmarking its performance against similar providers. Recent Ofsted reports from other providers and data from the TDA are used to compare performance and set targets.